

## Implementing ACRL's Assessment in Action Program at UNCG Libraries

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Association for  
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ACRL  
Advancing learning  
Transforming scholarship  
Association of College & Research Libraries  
A division of the American Library Association

## Why Study Transfer Students?

- Approx. 1,500 students
- “Hidden” among other student groups
- About half transfer in as juniors or seniors - miss first year information literacy program
- Some upper level instructors expect “students should know the library by now”
- What do they need, how do we provide it?

This is a significant population at UNCG.

We had some local data - transfer student headcount, some support activities on campus (incoming student orientation sessions focusing on adult and transfer students) – a local study seemed needed

It can be hard to identify this group and connect with them to provide customized assistance, though there are campus wide activities. Optional orientation sessions for incoming adult or transfer students. The foundations for learning elective that’s a lower division course has sections for adult or transfer students.

About half of the students transfer in as upper division students, missing first year instruction. And librarians would like to have some data to send to any upper level instructors who expect their students to “know the library by now.”

Literature on transfer students mentions transfer shock, but little on information literacy in transfer students.

## Our Original Study

- Fall 2014 email survey of incoming transfer students
- 154 responses
- Several information literacy-based tasks
- Self reports: age, intended major, previous library workshops, previous institution type, desired research skills training



**ASSESSMENT** *in Action*

In 2014 we emailed incoming transfer students

We asked them to perform several tasks

Also asked for some information about themselves – age, intended major, experience with library workshops, previous academic institution, what research skills training they would like

## Survey Tasks

- Choose keywords: “What are the long term effects of smoking on health?”
- Evaluate web sources: .gov site vs independent blog with no author information
- When to cite (choose all that apply): common knowledge, a statistic, and a quote

identifying keywords  
evaluating web sources  
to cite or not

## Results

- Students aged 30-59 more likely to report no library workshop experience
- Students with no library workshop experience more likely to score poorly in choosing keywords for a topic
- Other UNC school students more likely to score knowledgeable on choosing keywords
- Most students picked the authoritative website



**ASSESSMENT** *in Action*

Older students – more likely to not report library workshop experience; more likely to score poorly on keyword exercise

Students from other UNC schools more likely to score knowledgeable on choosing keywords; students from community colleges more likely to score poorly on choosing keywords

Takeaways for library instruction = targets for further effort – older students, students from community colleges

Shared this study with liaison librarians, stakeholders around campus, and at professional conferences

## Challenges

- Wanted keyword question that reflected ability to set up search statements
- Web source evaluation question too easy
- Citation question too ambiguous
- Intended major and desired training questions didn't provide useful information
- Survey approach didn't address intentions or reactions of participants



- And now for a little background on Assessment in Action...
- In September 2012 ACRL was awarded just shy of \$250K for the project “**Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success.**”
- Two of the planning grant partners were the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
- AiA is funded by IMLS for three-years. This is the third year.



The *Assessment in Action* program has three broad goals:

GOAL 1: Develop the professional competencies of librarians to document and communicate the value of their academic libraries primarily in relation to their institution's goals for student learning and success.

GOAL 2: Build and strengthen collaborative relationships with higher education stakeholders around the issue of library value.

GOAL 3: Contribute to higher education assessment work by creating approaches, strategies, and practices that document the contribution of academic libraries to the overall goals and missions of their institutions.



## AiA Year 3 Participants



The 55 teams, representing all types of institutions, come from 24 states, the District of Columbia and Australia.

Find a full list of institution names and locations on the ACRL website:  
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/AiA>

(Online map at <http://batchgeo.com/map/21afd3af0cd65134e6324469626be5fd> )

## Participating Institution Types

• Associate's	3
• Baccalaureate Colleges	10
• Master's Colleges & Universities	18
• Doctoral/Research Universities	1
• Research Universities (high/very high research activity)	20
• Special Focus Institutions--Medical schools, culinary, Theological seminary)	1
• Not Applicable	2

## Campus Team

### Campus Team

- Librarian Team Leader
- Additional Team Members
- Institutional Researcher
- Campus Team Can Change If Needed



## Team Members

- Participate in campus team/project
- Engage with team meetings and project communication
- Provide feedback to Team Leader in project development and revision

 **ASSESSMENT** *in Action*

Data, strategy, connections with study participants

Regular meetings

Although may hear about Moodle, which we are using for the librarian team leaders to work together, our local campus teams may choose to create shared work spaces online, such as google docs, etc.

## Team Leader

Locally:

- Leads Campus Team and AiA Project  
(3+ Hours Each Week)
- Convenes Campus Team Meetings and Communication
- Secures administrative and human subjects/IRB review and approvals as needed
- Serves as the campus team's contact with ACRL



On a local level:

## Team Leader



Nationally:

- Represents Campus Team at In-Person AiA Events
- Engages in Online Discussion Forums and Cohort-based Activities
- Is an active member of an AiA cohort

On a national level:

## Team Leader Cohorts

### Cohorts of Team Leaders

- Each Cohort Paired with an AiA Facilitator

### Primary Learning Community

- Discussions
- Peer Feedback
- Support Network
- Complementary Expertise

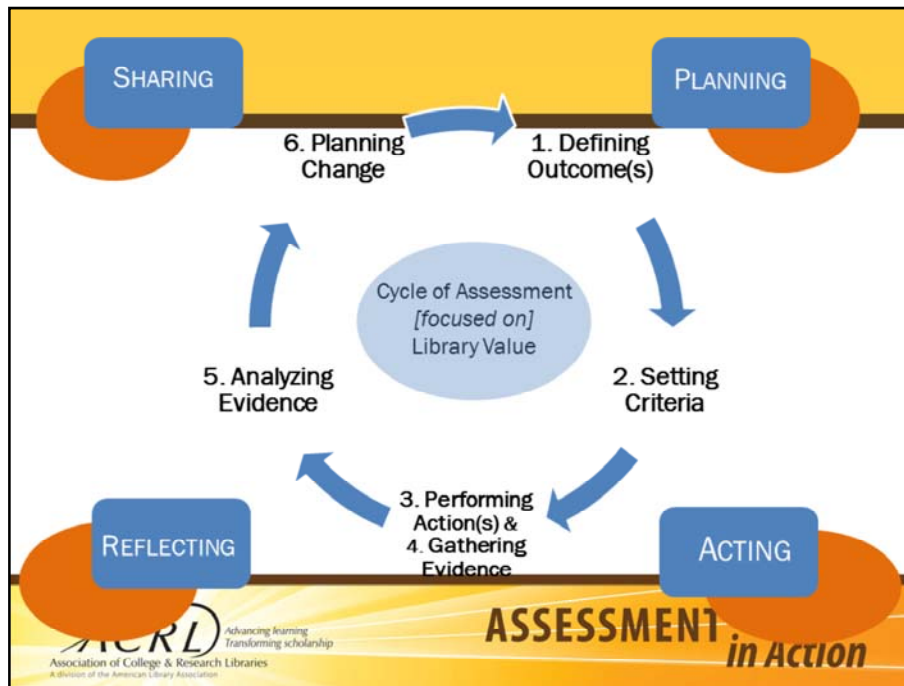


**ASSESSMENT** *in Action*

Cohorts provide the primary learning community for the team leaders.

A learning community creates a social structure for sharing documents, stories, and other resources that help people make sense of new knowledge. And it provides a rich environment for sharing ways to apply new knowledge in practice.

Initially, we indicated a timeline for when we'd be collecting data. Cohorts were roughly, as much as possible, arranged to put those with similar timelines together.



AiA uses this model of the assessment cycle to organize our projects. In this model, the cycle is iterative.

Outoc



**Program Assessment  
6 Question Design**

**#1 Outcome:**  
How are faculty/students/ researchers/  
or ? changed as a result of our efforts?

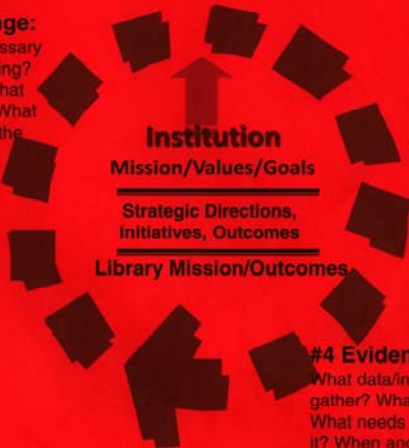
**#2 Criteria:**  
How will we know we  
have met our  
outcomes? What  
standards of success  
will we use?

**#3 Action:**  
What actions do  
we take to make  
the outcome  
happen?

**#4 Evidence:**  
What data/information do we need to  
gather? What process will be used?  
What needs to be designed to gather  
it? When and how and when will we  
gather it? How will it be recorded or  
documented?

**#6 Planning/Change:**  
What changes are necessary  
as a result of the learning?  
What is working well that  
needs to be nurtured? What  
are our priorities and the  
plan for action?

**#5 Analysis:**  
What can we learn  
from the evidence/  
data? Are our  
current actions  
getting us toward  
our outcome?



"Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success" is undertaken by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in partnership with the Association for Institutional Research and the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities. This program is a continuation of ACRL's focus of Academic Libraries Initiative, in close partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services. <http://www.acrl.org>

ACRL 2011

## Example, Outcome

"Transfer students utilize targeted library instruction and outreach opportunities in order to increase their information literacy knowledge and skills for greater student success and retention."

Cohorts helped each other with outcomes. Encouraged to use Bloom's Taxonomy.

## Example, Criteria

“1. Transfer students who have attended a library instruction session in their FFL 250 class score higher in information literacy skills after their class than they did in an initial pre-test.

2. Transfer students who entered in 2014 score higher in information literacy skills if they have had library instruction or consulted reference assistance during this past year.”

One in cohort suggested percentage improvement.

## Focused Research Agenda

The Library impact on ...

- student enrollment
- **student retention** and graduation rates
- **student success**
- **student achievement**
- **student learning**
- student experience
- faculty research productivity
- faculty grant proposals and funding
- faculty teaching
- overall institutional reputation or prestige

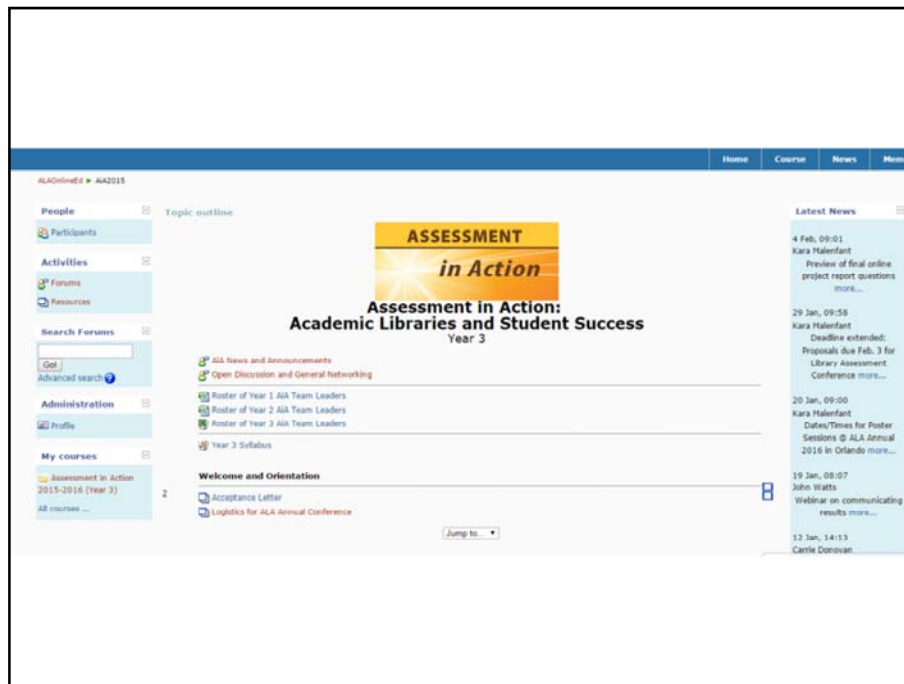


**ASSESSMENT**  
*in Action*

ACRL advancing learning  
transforming scholarship

There is a lot of curiosity and research happening in academic libraries around the topic of value and impact of libraries, librarians, and library initiatives. AiA is primarily focused on these aspects of impact...

The following examples from AiA Year 1 will give you a more practical idea of what this kind of action research looks like on-the-ground.



This is a screenshot of the front page of our course moodle. You'll see links to our forums and resources. We have multiple webcasts, and they are uploaded for later viewing. We also have regular assignments in the forums...

## Our team

- Karen Grigg, Science Liaison, team leader
- Lea Leininger, Health Sciences Librarian, member of previous research study
- Kathy Crowe, Associate Dean for Public Services
- Kim Sousa Peoples, Director, New Student Transitions & First Year Experience
- Jeff Lail, Assistant Director for Student Groups and Assessment



**ASSESSMENT** *in Action*

Since teams are required to have members in the organization outside of the library, we identified some logical participants; people who already work with assessment and transfer students. Lea already participated in the previous study, so she was a natural fit. Kathy Crowe, our Associate Dean for Public Services, expressed interest in becoming involved, and it was a boon to have someone at her level, someone who drives library services, on board. Kim Sousa Peoples and Jeff Lail both work closely with transfer students, and Jeff is very involved with assessment.

## Study 1- Pre-test/Post-test

- Instruction, 2 sessions of FFL 250
- Topics
  - Using UNCG's library catalog to search for books
  - Identifying scholarly vs. popular articles
- Pre-test/Post Test
  - Choose the scholarly article
  - Catalog searching exercise
  - Attitude/perception
    - Which skill is the most challenging, and why?

We tossed around a lot of ideas for follow-up studies. So many, in fact, that we decided to go with two, each of which would assess different things. We had an opportunity to offer two library instruction to FFL 250, Foundations for Learning. Two sections in Fall 2015 included our population: Enhancing the Transfer/Adult Student Experience. We focused on two main topics- using the catalog to search for books and discerning between scholarly and popular articles. We decided to do a pre-test, intervention, post test assessment where we asked them.

FFL 250, Pre-class Assessment

\* Required

Last name \*

First Name \*

Which of these two articles is scholarly? \*

☐ <http://tinyurl.com/morckas>

☐ <http://tinyurl.com/thegendergap>

Why did you select the article you chose? \*

Here is the form.



Start at UNCG Library's web site, <http://library.uncg.edu>. Search for the book title "Thinking, Fast and Slow" Who is the author? \*

What year was the book written?

What is the book's call number in the library?

Based on your experience at your previous college library and/or public library, how would you rate your comfort level with finding books in the library, with 1 being not comfortable, 2 being somewhat comfortable, and 3 being very comfortable? \*

1 2 3

not comfortable @ @ @ very comfortable

Based on your experience at your previous college library and/or public library, how would you rate your comfort level with finding journal articles on a topic, with 1 being not comfortable, 2 being somewhat comfortable, and 3 being very comfortable?

1 2 3

not comfortable @ @ @ very comfortable

== \* - - - - - == \*\* \*\* - - - - -

Based on your experience at your previous college library and/or public library, how would you rate your comfort level with evaluating whether a source is popular or scholarly, with 1 being not comfortable, 2 being somewhat comfortable, and 3 being very comfortable? \*

1 2 3

not comfortable ☐ ☐ ☐ very comfortable

Which skill do you think is the MOST challenging? \*

Choose one

- ☐ Determining whether an article is popular or scholarly
- ☐ Finding a journal article on a topic
- ☐ Figuring out where to go to find the kind of information I need
- ☐ Creating proper bibliographies and using correct citation style

Why do you believe this information literacy skill will be the most challenging?

**Submit**

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

100% You made it.

## FFL 250, Post-class Assessment

\* Required

Last name \*

First Name \*

Which of these two articles is scholarly? \*

☐ <http://tinyurl.com/cvtdg96>

☐ <http://tinyurl.com/bnmgallgts>

Why did you select the article you chose? \*

Start at UNCG Library's web site, <http://library.uncg.edu>. Search for the book title "The Wilderness World of John Muir". Who is the author?

What year was the book written?

What is the book's call number in the library?

Based on your experience at your previous college library and/or public library, how would you rate your comfort level with finding books in the library, with 1 being not comfortable, 2 being somewhat comfortable, and 3 being very comfortable? \*

1 2 3

not comfortable ☐ ☐ ☐ very comfortable

Based on your experience at your previous college library and/or public library, how would you rate your comfort level with finding journal articles on a topic, with 1 being not comfortable, 2 being somewhat comfortable, and 3 being very comfortable? \*

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not comfortable ☐ ☐ ☐ very comfortable

Based on your experience at your previous college library and/or public library, how would you rate your comfort level with evaluating whether a source is popular or scholarly, with 1 being not comfortable, 2 being somewhat comfortable, and 3 being very comfortable? \*

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Based on your experience at your previous college library and/or public library, how would you rate your comfort level with evaluating whether a source is popular or scholarly, with 1 being not comfortable, 2 being somewhat comfortable, and 3 being very comfortable? \*

1 2 3

not comfortable ☐ ☐ ☐ very comfortable

Which skill do you think is the MOST challenging? \*

Choose one.

- ☐ Creating proper bibliographies and using correct citation style
- ☐ Finding a journal article on a topic
- ☐ Figuring out where to go to find the kind of information I need
- ☐ Determining whether an article is popular or scholarly

Why do you believe this information literacy skill will be the most challenging?

**Submit**

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

100% You made it.

## Challenges, Pre- and Post-test

- Does instrument test memory, or knowledge?
- Original plan for pre-test before session went awry.
- Assumptions of basic skill levels were off.
- Students did not have sufficient time.
- Many incomplete responses.

So, we had some issues with our assessment tool. First of all, many assessment experts suggest that when a pre-test and post-test are conducted during the same session, you are mainly testing how well someone remembers something you just told them, rather than long term retention and the ability to synthesize. For this reason, we had originally planned to ask instructors to assign the pre-test via e-mail before class. A better option might have been to ask instructors to assign the post-test after the class at a later date, or to examine products, if there were any. But, due to slow response on the instructor's end, we did not have enough time to have the pre-tests sent out early. So we had to do both during class time, which threw our schedule off. Also, some of the students did not have the computer skills necessary to follow the directions of the pre-test. We think one of the two sessions might have been a specific session for adult learners with special needs. So, we made assumptions about their skill levels, and because they were struggling to even get on the web, there was insufficient time, and many of the responses were incomplete.

## What we learned

- Must have instructor buy-in
- Pre-test should be done in advance
- Plan time more realistically
- Ask instructor about baseline skills- what we assumed would take 10 minutes took twice as long.

## What we hope to find

- Statistician believed despite difficulties, should have salvageable data.
- That results show a greater understanding of Information Literacy skills after intervention.
- Hope for a repeat next year taking into account the lessons learned.



## Study 2- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Transfer Student Survey

- Resurveyed 2014 entering transfer students
- Tweaked demographics questions
- Gave similar information literacy “quiz”
- Asked about librarian interventions by type

One thing we wanted to do is to check back in with the students we surveyed in 2014. We wanted to see if their skill levels had improved, and also, if any librarian interactions had occurred. We also wanted a chance to tweak our questions- both the quiz questions and the demographics questions. We learned in the first study that students who were older were the least knowledgeable, but we wanted to know if this was more a function of age, or a function of how long it had been since they had last been in school. So we added a question asking about that.

The first three questions are to find out what strategies and skills you use when searching for background and research information on topics.

I want to find a journal article on the topic, "What are the long term effects of smoking on health?". What exact words might I type in the search box of one of the library's journal article databases?

I'm doing an informative speech about the health effects of consuming high fructose corn syrup. Can you tell which of these web pages would be the best source for me to use?

- ☐ <http://sweetsurprise.com/>
- ☐ <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/2013/01/01/how-corn-syrup-might-be-making-us-hungry-and-fat/>

Why did you select this website?

If I am writing a paper, which of these statements should I cite? (tell my audience where I found the information). Please check each statement that needs a citation.

- ☐ I think it's interesting that some online students are less satisfied with college than students who meet in a traditional classroom.
- ☐ Americans have the right to freedom of speech.
- ☐ In his "I have a dream" speech, Martin Luther King Jr. said "If America is to be a great nation, this must become true."

Add item 

After page 2 Continue to next page 

## 2nd Year Transfer Students- Information Searching and Reporting Skills

Have you received help from a reference librarian at UNC0? Check all that apply.

- ☐ In person at the reference desk?
- ☐ On the phone with reference staff?
- ☐ Online chatting with reference staff?
- ☐ In person meeting with your subject librarian?
- ☐ E-mail with your subject librarian?

Has a librarian provided instruction in any class you have attended at UNC0?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

[Back](#)

[Continue](#)

90% completed

## Searching and Reporting Skills

What kind of institution are you transferring from?

If other, please let us know:

- ☐ Another school in the UNC system
- ☐ A university or college outside of that system
- ☐ A community college
- ☐ Other:

How many years had it been since you had last attended another university, college, or community college?

- ☐ 0- there was no gap between my previous institution and UNC0
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ Over 10 years

What is your age?

- ☐ 18-22 years old
- ☐ 23-29 years old
- ☐ 30-59 years old
- ☐ 60 years or older

What year will you be starting at UNC0?

- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior

## Searching and Reporting Skills

What kind of institution are you transferring from?

If other, please let us know:

- ☐ Another school in the UNC system
- ☐ A university or college outside of that system
- ☐ A community college
- ☐ Other:

How many years had it been since you had last attended another university, college, or community college?

- ☐ 0- there was no gap between my previous institution and UNC
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ Over 10 years

What is your age?

- ☐ 18-22 years old
- ☐ 23-29 years old
- ☐ 30-59 years old
- ☐ 60 years or older

What year will you be starting at UNC?

- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior

**Rubric- 2+ Year Transfer Students**

**1. Question:**

I want to find a journal article on the topic, "What are the long term effects of smoking on health?" What exact words might I type in the search box of one of the library's journal article databases?

Exclude	1	2	3	4
Blank responses	Includes as least one of these concepts or synonyms: 1. long term effects OR long term 2. smoking 3. health	Includes at least two of these concepts or synonyms: 1. long term OR long term effects 2. smoking 3. health	Includes all three concepts: 1. long term effects or long term 2. smoking 3. health	Includes all three concepts in a search statement that correctly uses AND between concepts: 1. long term effects or long term 2. smoking 3. health

Ideas related to one of the core concepts (medicine, physiology) and narrower versions of a concept (tobacco instead of smoking) were not counted as one of the concepts.


Punctuation was ignored, unless quotation marks were used in a way that would obviously harm the effectiveness of the search in an article database. In that case we bumped the response down one point. Quotation marks are a well-known search command, so we assumed that after a year at UNGC these students realize that using them would affect article searching, therefore the use of quotation marks.

If a student use AND and OR incorrectly, in a way that would yield no results or way too many results for the searcher to ever pick out a relevant result, that response was bumped down one point.

Misspellings were ignored. We could not determine whether misspellings were intentional. Some article databases suggest spelling corrections. It has been our experience in real world situations that students who don't get results due to misspelling usually correct themselves.

## Challenges

- Half of the e-mail addresses now invalid!
- We found that using rubrics require many iterations.
- Require user ID? question of more access to demographic data vs. risk lower response rate.
- Dilemma- use same questions vs. improved questions.
- External analysis- lack of regular response makes us nervous.



**ASSESSMENT** *in Action*

This study had challenges as well, though not nearly as many as the pre-and post-test. First, almost half of the original e-mail addresses bounced back. This is important information, though, as it gives a sense of the retention problem. I want to pull a stat on the number of students each year who are NOT transfer students who drop out and compare it to this percentage.

The group debated over whether we should ask for what we call the “88 number- a long number that is UNCG’s unique identifier. We could pull much more demographic data if we did this, but we were risking a much lower response rate. I have been here 3 years and I still don’t have mine memorized, and frankly, I often opt out of completing surveys if it means looking the darn thing up. With our potential lower response rate anyway, we opted to NOT get the 88 numbers and ask the demographic questions. Next time, I might choose differently just to see what happens.

Additionally, we wanted to tweak some of the questions that didn’t work well for us last time. But- if we had differently structured questions, could we compare these results vs the initial ones? Apples vs. oranges. We decided to go with a modified “middle ground” and change them slightly, not radically. We realized that trying to determine whether students have improved after librarian interventions would mainly mean comparing answers within the same survey.

We had a grad student employed by the library last year who we directly hired. He did a great job with the data analysis. However, he graduated. We are now going through the Office of Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Services, and don't have direct authority. Communication can be sporadic, and it makes us a little nervous.



## What we hope to find

- Students who had had librarian interactions score higher than those who have not.
- Students show overall improvement in skills since last year.
- Results suggest clear plan of action.

## Thoughts on AiA program

- Very structured approach to doing assessment. The cycle works!
- There are other instruments than surveys or focus group!
- Focus on collaborating across campus helpful.
- A lot of work, but develop better research skills

## Our next steps

- Based on results, use data and new connections to plan services for transfer students.
- Partner with our feeder institutions.
- More assessment; perhaps qualitative

## Thank you!

Questions? Please contact us

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Lea Leininger, [laleinin@uncg.edu](mailto:laleinin@uncg.edu)

NC DOCKS: <https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg>



**ASSESSMENT** *in Action*